

Discharged Without Notice

By Henry Crider Evans

The slow, drizzling rain which had steadily fallen since the early part of the afternoon and which threatened to continue to fall during the rest of the evening, was not more dismal and dreary than the heart of the girl who shrank back in the corner seat of the elevated train, gazing through the clouded window panes with dull, unseeing eyes.

She was dressed in a shabby black dress and jacket; her shoes were worn and her hat had the look of being made and remade from one dated many years before.

Mollie Orth had left home that morning with but 15 cents in her purse, her hopes raised high, and a feeling in her heart that she would succeed this time. She smiled at the conductor as she handed him her fare, smiled at the little girl sitting in the seat across from her tenderly hugging a bedraggled doll in her arms; indeed, smiled at every one she saw, for Mollie was decidedly an optimist, and so surely as failure and worry and heartache laid her spirits low, just so surely would they rise again with the beginning of a new day.

All morning she wandered down street after street, vainly seeking employment. After awhile the smile left her lips and the song died out of her heart. Gradually, her limbs grew more and more tired, until at last her feet refused to carry her farther and, entering the waiting room of a large department store, she sank into a chair and wearily closed her eyes.

The matron, a neatly-dressed woman with a kind, motherly face, glanced at the girl with understanding and sympathy in her eyes. The story was so evident and such an old one!

"Wouldn't you care to glance over this paper while you are resting?" asked the matron, handing her a newspaper with a smile that conveyed encouragement and sympathy to the girl's heart. Mollie grasped it eagerly, murmuring her thanks. As the woman expected, she turned at once to the "help wanted" page and hastily scanned its columns.

There was but one ad. which she could answer, but even this was a ray of hope which she eagerly seized upon. It was raining when she reached the street, but although she had no umbrella she started all undaunted for the address given in the paper.

It was ten long blocks from the store which she had left and she was thoroughly drenched by the time she reached her destination. Approaching the office boy she inquired for the manager, and was pointed out a large, heavily-built man seated behind a huge desk, his head bent over a heap of papers.

"Well, what can I do for you?" he asked sharply as Mollie stood patiently awaiting his attention.

The girl timidly stated her errand, answering his numerous questions with straightforward honesty.

"Well," he said, at length, "you don't look overstrong, but guess you'll do. We expect good work from our people, and if we can't get it out of them we don't keep 'em—that's all. Where are your references?"

"I haven't any," began Mollie, tremulously. "I never thought to ask for any at the last place I worked in."

The man scowled as he waved her aside with a fat, pudgy hand. "No go, no go. No reference, no job. Why didn't you say so right away instead of wasting all my time?"

"Oh, cried Mollie, in dismay. "Only try me, sir! I will work hard, you will see how fast my fingers can fly. Please, please give me just a trial! I need the money so badly."

The man turned resolutely to his desk. "Can't do it, I tell you. We don't do business that way."

Mollie walked blindly out of the office and was once more on the street. Feeling faint she determined to spend half of her last dime for a cup of coffee. She entered a cozy little restaurant, following the usher to a table near the end of the room.

Mollie paused long over her coffee, drinking in its sweet fragrance and feeling a delicious sense of comfort as the strong liquid sent a flush of warmth through her body. She rose regretfully when her cup was empty, and made for the cashier's desk, which was overcrowded, the people standing in line to pay for their checks and the cashier herself nervous and hurried.

Mollie laid her check, which called for five cents, upon the desk, together with her solitary dime, and was given five brand-new pennies in change. How bright they looked and how they shone, almost as if they were made of gold, she thought, as she walked slowly down the street. Why, one was different from the rest! Surely it was not a common penny! Hastily

turning it over in her hand, she saw that she was holding, not a penny, but a \$10 gold piece!

"Take it back! It isn't yours, and it will be dishonest to keep it," whispered a voice which seemed so real that she started and glanced apprehensively over her shoulder. What a struggle she had to put that voice in the background. This meant bread and meat to her, food for the little sisters at home and peace to the worried mother, whose hair was fast becoming streaked with gray. She could not give it up, she would not! A feeling of fierce exultation possessed her. Her feet fairly flew up the steps leading to the elevated station, the bit of gold clutched tightly in her hand. The cashier at the turnstile glanced up in surprise as Mollie's trembling fingers dropped the piece of money before her.

"Have you no smaller change than this?" she asked, then as Mollie nodded her head, she carefully counted out the change.

How many times Mollie's resolution weakened and faltered that night! As she met her mother's eager, questioning glance as she entered the door; as she saw the look of blank despair in her eyes as she faltered out her failure, her heart misgave her, and she longed to pour the money into her mother's thin hands, telling her that there was enough for food and clothes, warmth and comfort until she could secure a position. Again, at the supper table, as she helped herself to a dried piece of bread and one small, mealy potato, the temptation to keep the money grew almost too strong to resist.

The next morning found her once more entering the little restaurant. She noticed a new girl in the cashier's place, and her heart sank in shame. She inquired for the manager, and was shown into a little side room to a man bending over a table figuring up accounts. He was about thirty, tall, broad-shouldered, with the kindest brown eyes in the world, she thought. Timidly she handed him the change she had received from the gold piece and told her story. Then all at once she found herself crying softly, as she poured out the whole story of the struggle and temptation she had endured.

"There, there; don't cry any more. It's all over now and you have won a victory to be proud of. Now listen to my proposition. Miss Johnson, our former cashier, has been suffering from extreme nervousness for a long time and was only waiting for the end of the season to give up work entirely until her health was once more restored. The final straw came last night, when she discovered the shortage in her accounts, and she insisted upon making up the loss to us, although we protested strongly against her doing so. Then she left, and we had to place one of our waitresses temporarily in her place. It will give me much pleasure to return this money to her, and also to offer you her position. We will give you \$10 a week to start. Will you take it?"

Mollie mutely nodded her head, her eyes shining with happiness. Ten dollars a week! That was more than she had ever earned before. Eager to prove her gratitude, she bent all her energy to her work, schooling her-

self to become more rapid and accurate each day.

Often, looking up from her work, she would find Mr. Asher, the manager and owner of the restaurant, watching her with a look in his brown eyes which she could not understand. She could always feel his presence, knew when he entered the room and when he left, a feeling for which she could not account.

On evening, after the last customer had departed, and the doors were closed for the day, as she was making out her report, he came over and stood beside her desk.

"Miss Orth, you have been with us two years now, haven't you?" he asked.

Mollie replied in the affirmative. "You are receiving a salary of \$15 a week now, are you not?" he asked again, and again Mollie nodded.

"Well, Miss Orth," he began hesitatingly, "we feel that you are worth more than we are paying you, although we cannot afford to raise your salary any higher, therefore I am going to ask you to resign your position."

Mollie gasped and stared at him with eyes filled with surprise and dismay. Asked to resign her position! What could she have done to deserve it? Her accounts always balanced evenly; she had supposed her work was giving complete satisfaction, and now, without warning, she was to be discharged.

"Don't feel so badly over it, Miss Orth. I am going to offer you another position, one which I trust you will not refuse. It is that of housekeeper to a lonely, solitary bachelor. Miss Orth, will you be my wife?"

Mollie gazed at him and then, just as she had done two years before, when he had offered her the position, she laid her head down upon her arms and burst into tears.

"Mollie! Little girl, don't you care? If you only knew how I have hoped and prayed that you did. Would you rather keep your position here, and have me give up my 'castle in Spain,' and go away. For go away I must, if you refuse me. I could not bear to stay here, to be near you day after day, and know that my hopes could never be realized! Tell me, Mollie, which shall it be? Don't cry any more, little girl, look up and tell me."

Mollie did look up, and the tears in her eyes only made them look brighter with joy and happiness shining through them as the sun behind a cloud.

"Oh, you ask me if I will marry you!" she cried. "If you only knew, if you only knew!"

The words, few as they were, were sufficient, for her eyes told the rest.

His Quotation Marks.

Senator Beveridge in an after dinner speech in Cleveland said of a corrupt politician: "The man's excuse is as absurd as the excuse that a certain minister offered on being convicted of plagiarism."

"Brethren," said this minister, "it is true that I occasionally borrow for my sermons, but I always acknowledge the fact in the pulpit by raising two fingers at the beginning and two at the end of the borrowed matter, thus indicating that it is quoted."

In Chill Iceland.

Among old-time laws against kissing those of Iceland appear to have been the most severe. Banishment was the penalty laid down for kissing another man's wife, either with or without her consent. The same punishment was enforced for kissing an unmarried woman against her will; if it could be proved that she had consented to be kissed the offender was still liable to a fine of a great quantity of cloth for each offense.—Minneapolis News.

When Announcing the Baby

There Are Various Ways of Spreading the News of the Stork's Visit.

When the stork visits a household the most modish way of spreading the news of his call is by card announcement. This plan has the disadvantage of delay, however, as there is a minimum of time in which cards can be engraved and mailed, not to mention the fact that the oftentimes perplexing question of naming the baby must be decided first.

One young couple, however, though somewhat wastefully, overcame that seemingly necessary delay by deciding that if their "first" were a boy he should be called, say, John Henry, while if she happened to be the less desired girl her name was to be, say, Clementine. So they had two sets of cards engraved and ready for mailing the moment that the exact status of things was known. It would have been dreadful, though, if in the inevitable household confusion the wrong box of cards had been mailed and the others thrown into the furnace before the mistake was discovered.

So far as New York is concerned, it is those of European birth or parentage who most frequently make the paid public announcement. Sometimes they are amusing in their frankness

and ingenuousness. These sometimes contain the postlude, "Mother and son doing well," and one started off with the words: "A loving daughter born to." The climax was capped, however, by one the other day that closed in this wise:

"A 12-pound boy. Thanks to Drs. So and So and Such and Such and to Mrs. Blank."

A Secret Tragedy.

An Atchison woman called up a friend over the telephone this morning, and when she heard a response asked, "Is this Mrs. A.?" The answer was inaudible. "I want to tell you a great secret, Mrs. A.," the woman said, and for the next 15 minutes she poured out her heart. Then when she stopped to get her breath a reply came over the line: "This isn't Mrs. A. I will call her."—Atchison Globe.

Quite Unnecessary.

"Bella is wearing a 'Kiss Not' button."

"She might as well wear a life preserver to a bridge whist party."

Most successful men will tell you that it is easier in the end to do things thoroughly than otherwise.

The Wearing of the Yellow

By Dorothy Blackmore

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Just why Mrs. Thompson Cardinger decided to use yellow as her color scheme at the last of the series of bridge parties she was giving is not known. It may have been that it was her favorite shade; it may have been that it harmonized with her costume of the afternoon, or, it may have been simply because yellow spring flowers, jonquils, daisies and tulips were plentiful in the florists' shops in March.

But the very fact that she had selected yellow instead of any other hue in the rainbow made all the difference in the world to her faithful cook, Norah.

Norah was a daughter of the Emerald Isle and she never lost an opportunity to go to a St. Patrick's ball whenever the anniversary of that good saint's birth rolled around. And in all the five years that she had been in the country she had never failed to dance the opening waltz with big Pat Deasy from her own County Cork.

Norah's mistress had chosen the afternoon of St. Patrick's day for her bridge party, and when the last guest had gone and Mrs. Cardinger's duties as hostess were over, she stepped into the kitchen to give a word of praise to her cook for the extra effort she had made to have the pastries and coffee toothsome and dainty.

"And, Norah, I want you to wear a bunch of those lovely jonquils to your ball tonight. They will add much to your appearance. Also, you may serve dinner at 6:30 instead of seven, so as to be in plenty of time," she said good naturedly.

Norah sang over her cook stove, and when dinner was over she mounted the stairs to her room to dress in her finest frock. And in her hand she



carried a bunch of the lovely yellow flowers her mistress had given her.

She pinned them this way and that, and it was not without a thought as to how Pat would like them best that she finally arranged them in her belt, pinned there by a shamrock Pat himself had given her the year before.

On her way uptown to the ball Norah stopped to call for her chum, Katie Malone, who was maid-of-all-work to a family in the next block.

"An' you must share my bouquet, Katie, my darlin'," she said to the girl.

Their tongues wagged busily as they climbed the stairs to the elevated road in great haste lest they miss even one strain of the fiddler's music. Their hearts were beating quickly in anticipation of the evening's pleasure, for Katie, too, had a son of Erin who awaited her coming with anxious eyes. It was not the custom in their set to be called for by their beaux—it was a waste of time, and the dancing and the escorting home again were the important things.

Bright lights streamed from each of the great ballroom windows as the girls approached the building where the Irish ball was an annual social function. They entered the cloakroom to dispose of their outer garments just as the orchestra inside began an introductory number.

Flushed and smiling, Norah and her chum made their appearance in the wide doorway of the ballroom to scan the assembled crowd for familiar faces. No sooner had they stepped onto the shining floor than they were pounced upon by half a dozen strange young men who demanded by what

right they came to St. Patrick's ball wearing the colors of the Orangeman? And, without further ceremony, the beloved bouquets were torn from the belts of the two girls and trampled under foot by the young Irishmen.

Norah had been innocent of the breach of etiquette she was making in wearing the flowers and her chum had been as guiltless of error. Now, as they retired to the dressing room, red faced and not knowing whether to be angry or merry, they looked at each other and broke into laughter.

"Faith, and I never thought of it at all, at all, Katie," said Norah, adjusting her disarranged belt. "I'm sorry I was so generous with my bouquet."

"It's nothing at all," retorted Katie, "but I saw Pat Deasy and Michael O'Flanagan standing on the other side of the room takin' in the whole thing. It's mad they are, or I'm not Katie Malone this night."

Now, Pat Deasy, though well favored in the eyes of Norah, was not her only admirer, and she had seen the time when his blue eyes flashed at the presence of another young man in her spotless kitchen. "Perchance," she thought now, "he thinks I am after getting the flowers from Tom."

At least, whether the two swains took the wearing of the yellow flowers as a personal insult or whether they had other reasons for ignoring their hitherto adored ones, Norah and Katie heard the opening strains of "Come Back to Erin" wafted from the orchestra without noticing the approach of their usual partners.

Never long alone at a ball, Norah was soon whirling about the room in the arms of another admirer. And from the way in which her soft Irish laugh rippled in response to bits of witty banter her partner whispered in her ear she was conscious of no other man in the room. She was possessed of the inherent Irish quality of being all things to all people for the time being.

The ball waxed merry and waltzes and jigs and two-steps and barn dances were called off one after another, but Pat Deasy never once sought Norah as his partner; and she did not know that his eyes followed her through every turn of the dance. If, as he believed, she had deliberately worn flowers—and yellow flowers at that—sent her by his hated rival—she must indeed have forgotten all that he believed had been between them.

It was late in the evening that an Irish reel was proposed, and the orchestra struck up the merry music to which the feet of no true son of the verdant land can remain quiet. Norah, a new-found admirer in her wake, was taking her place. Her hair had become tumbled, her cheeks were as rosy as apples and her black-lashed blue eyes sparkled like diamonds. If her heart was heavy she did not let it dangle on her sleeve so that all who passed might see it.

In the intricacies of the reel, Norah, by counting ahead, could see that before many moments she must clasp hands with Pat Deasy, and her heart thumped excitedly at the prospect. Would he recognize her? Would he press her fingers—never so slightly?

It was her turn and she put her hand in the great one Pat extended. Yes; he held it closely, more closely than any other partner would dare to hold it. Quick as a flash, Norah detached the green shamrock pin from her belt and, when next she met Pat in the dance, slipped it into his palm. Across the petals was written in gilt letters, "Come Back to Erin."

When the reel was over and the dancers stood about the refreshment table or sat in cool corners, Pat sought out Norah, the message of the pin having been too much for him to resist. And, perhaps, after all, he had been mistaken.

"Norah, is it all over between us?" he asked, his color rising to the roots of his well-brushed black hair.

"An' why should it be?" asked the girl, saucily.

"Sure, you wore the yellow flowers to the ball and who but that hateful Tom Horton could have given them to you—to spite me?" he asked.

"It's a silly Mick you are, Pat," she retorted, making room for him beside her on the bench. "It was my lady who gave them to me off her own table to wear to the ball to charm you with. Oh, Pat!"

And, on the way home, Pat and Norah decided to visit the priest before another St. Patrick's ball should take place. But so busy were they in their own affairs that they did not see Katie and her beau deciding the same thing in the other end of the elevated coach.